



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHP Assigns First Woman To Lead Division Field Command

(VALLEJO, CA) -- California Highway Patrol (CHP) Commissioner Mike Brown has assigned newly promoted Deputy Chief Teresa Becher to lead the Department's Golden Gate Division command effective November 1, 2005.

Chief Becher is the first woman in the Department's 76 year history to be assigned as a Field Division Commander and is only the second woman in the Department's history to reach the rank of Deputy Chief. "This is one of the most important assignments in the CHP. Teresa Becher is more than up to the challenge. This appointment proves there is no glass ceiling for women at the CHP," Said Commission Brown.

Before 1974, if women wanted to work for the California Highway Patrol, regulations said they could only work in non-officer jobs. But women challenged those regulations, and thanks to a federal ruling, the Women Traffic Officer Project (WTOP) was created. The project was a two-year experiment to determine whether women were able to effectively perform state traffic officer duties and as they say – the rest is history.

www.chp.ca.gov/recruiting/html/women_hx.html

Chief Becher was born in Biloxi, Mississippi but raised in Southern California where she attended school in Orange and Riverside counties. Upon graduation from Norco senior high school, Chief Becher went to work for the Hughes Aircraft Company while attending college. After 5 years of programming computers she decided to see the world and went to work in the Commercial Industry.

She first went to work driving trucks cross country and then settled in with a southern California company doing route work. It was during a visit with a CHP Commercial Vehicle Specialist, who was completing a terminal inspection, that it was first suggested that she consider a career with the CHP. Chief Becher then pursued a career in law enforcement and in 1989 she entered the CHP academy in Sacramento.

Upon graduation from the CHP academy at the age of 30, Chief Becher was assigned to the Arrowhead Area office in southern California where she spent her first **four** years on road patrol.

She then took a promotional exam for Sergeant, which she passed, and was assigned to the Monterey Area office for 2 years before being reassigned to the CHP Sacramento headquarters where she worked analyzing senate/assembly bills dealing with traffic safety issues before they became law.

In 1998, Chief Becher promoted to the rank of lieutenant and in 1999, then Business, Transportation and Housing Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, appointed her as Interim Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) responsible for managing 500 traffic safety grants with an annual budget of \$80 million dollars. At the national level, Chief Becher joined the Governor's Highway Safety Association where she became treasurer and then Vice Chair of the organization www.statehighwaysafety.org

During Chief Becher's three years in charge at OTS, she promoted to Assistant Chief. In 2003, she was transferred to CHP's Protective Services Division, which is responsible for the protection of state employees, dignitaries and property.

Chief Becher has Bachelors of Arts degrees in Government from California State University at Sacramento (CSUS) and has completed the Law Enforcement Command College through California's Police Officers Standards and Training (POST).

Now as Commander of CHP's second largest Division, she is in charge of 1,100 uniformed officers and 350 non-uniformed employees. She takes on the challenges of lowering deaths and injuries in a transportation system with over 620 miles of freeways and with thousands of miles of unincorporated roadways. Post 9-11 security remains a major focus of the CHP, and oversight of the security of State infrastructure within the nine Bay Area counties, including the Golden Gate Bridge, will also fall on the shoulders of Chief Becher.

Media Note: Media interviews can be arranged in next two days with Chief Teresa Becher through the Public Affairs Officers listed above. Commission Mike Brown is available for comment via Phone and is in San Francisco for TV interviews on Tuesday and Wednesday.

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